

A Brexit summer reading guide



Have you been struggling to keep up with all the new books on Brexit? Were you secretly planning to spend your summer holiday catching up on some of them? OK – perhaps not. But if you were, [Tim Oliver](#) is here to help with a guide on what to take away with you to the beach or pool to focus on an issue that will keep us busy for several more summers to come.

Summer brings with it a host of reading lists on what to take away with you to while away the hours by the poolside or on the beach. The thought of a guide on what books to take away to read on Brexit might fill most people with horror. Even though Brexit negotiations are now underway, ‘banging on about Europe’, as David Cameron once put it, remains a sure way of boring most people. Giving the appearance you’re prepared to bang on about it while on holiday might seem just downright bizarre.

But that doesn’t apply to everyone. The number of people bored by others banging on about Europe is bound to decline as Brexit hits home. And it certainly doesn’t apply to those struggling to study and understand Brexit, aka ‘[Brexicologists](#)’. The past year has witnessed a flood of books explaining what happened in June 2016 and trying to understand what might happen next. Then there’s the mountain of reports and articles from governments, parliaments, think tanks, universities, businesses and so forth. We’ll leave them for another day.

It’s easy to lose track and even though it might not be the ideal way (or one many are prepared to admit) to use a summer holiday, time away does offer a chance to reflect on the biggest political development Britain has faced in decades. Below I list some of the best books published since the referendum. A regularly updated list can be found on my [website](#).



Image by Tim Oliver.

The campaigns

Not long seemed to pass between the final votes being counted and the appearance of the first books telling of what happened inside the campaigns. Tim Shipman's [All Out War: The full story of how Brexit sank Britain's political class](#) remains a provocative and well-written account of both the Remain and Leave campaigns. Cameron's communications director, Craig Oliver, was equally quick out of the blocks with [Unleashing Demons: The inside story of Brexit](#). It remains one of the best insider accounts. Owen Bennett's [The Brexit Club](#) takes us into the victorious but often deeply fractious Leave campaigns. Another quickly published account is Harry Mount's [Summer Madness: How Brexit split the Tories, destroyed Labour and divided the country](#). Love him or loathe him, UKIP funder and businessman Aaron Banks's updated [The Bad Boys of Brexit](#) is guaranteed to evoke strong feelings.

Explaining the vote

The rush to have the first word and so define history means anecdotes can win out over careful analysis. Jason Farrell and Paul Goldsmith offered a more considered approach in [How to Lose A Referendum: The Definitive Story of Why the UK Voted for Brexit](#). In explaining their eighteen key reasons for Leave's victory, they delve into both the history of UK-EU relations and more recent developments in the campaign.

Former Labour minister Denis MacShane was quick to turn his pre-referendum book 'Brexit: How Britain will leave the EU' into [Brexit: How Britain Left Europe](#). Last time I heard he was working on the next book *Brexit: How Britain will stay in the EU*, which will focus on the limits of Brexit and be ideal reading for your 2018 summer holiday.

Tory donor and polling supremo Lord Ashcroft teamed up with Kevin Culwick to quickly publish [Well, You Did Ask... Why the UK voted to leave the EU](#). Published soon after the vote, it collated some of the earliest polling that helped explain why the British people voted as they did.

The most detailed analysis of the vote so far published is Harold Clarke, Matt Goodwin and Paul Whiteley's [Brexit: Why Britain voted to leave the European Union](#). As the most comprehensive analysis so far of the vote it is required reading for anyone interested in the referendum. You can read my review of the book for the LSE's Brexit blog [here](#).

If numbers are not your thing then Andrew Glencross's [Why the UK voted for Brexit](#) provides a short academic analysis of the referendum divided into four sections covering the history of Euroscepticism, the renegotiation, the campaign, and the future handling of Brexit. It focuses on the nature of direct democracy in the UK and the nature of Euroscepticism.

What now?

Brexit is not an event or a single process, but a series of potentially open-ended processes touching on everything from tariffs and health to matters of war and peace. Understanding where this unprecedented development takes the UK or the EU is the biggest challenge Brexit poses. Almost every book listed in this review offers some ideas on where we go next. Some do so more than others.

Published not long after the vote, journalist Ian Dunt's [Brexit: What the hell happens now?](#) gives an easily digested – but Remain leaning – account of what may unfold.

A more detailed and academic analysis looking at the implications of Brexit across a wide range of institutions and policy areas can be found in Janice Morphet's [Beyond Brexit: How to assess the UK's future](#).

Cambridge professor of law, Kenneth Armstrong's [Brexit Time: Leaving the EU – why, how and when?](#) is divided into four sections examining the world before the vote, the vote itself, preparing for Brexit, and Brexit itself. It's accompanied by a very helpful online edition.

Former foreign secretary, SDP leader and supporter of Leave, David Owen, teamed up with David Ludlow to write [British Foreign Policy After Brexit](#), which offers thoughts on where Brexit leaves Britain in the world.

UCP's 'Haus Curiosities' series of short pamphlets offers two on Brexit. C4 News political editor, Gary Gibbon's [Breaking Point: The UK referendum on the EU and its aftermath](#), looks not only into what drove Brexit but provides some analysis of what it could mean for the UK and the remaining EU. Stephen Green's [Brexit and the British](#) delves into the divisions in British society to find answers to why Britain voted as it did.

Academic overviews

The breadth of Brexit as a topic means we can expect many edited books on the topic. Both of those so far produced are ideal for postgraduate readers or those with an existing knowledge of the topic of UK-EU relations.

David Bailey and Leslie Budd's [The Political Economy of Brexit](#) looks not only at the political economy of Brexit, but also at such issues as the unity of the UK and the future of the EU. Contributors include Edgar Morgenroth, Jan Toporowski, Lisa De Propriis, Sukhwinder Salh, Margarita Nyfoudi, Alex De Ruyter, Dimitris P. Sotiropoulos, John Milios, Jim Gallagher, John Bachtler, and yours truly.

Similarly, William Outhwaite's [Brexit: Sociological Responses](#) builds around a sociological approach a broad-ranging coverage of the topic. Contributors include Martin Westlake, Jonathan Hearn, John Holmwood, Stefan Auer, Craig Calhoun, Chris Thornhill, Gurminder K. Bhambra, Colin Crouch, Gerard Delanty, Antje Wiener, Simon Susen, Harry F. Dahms, Adrian Favell, and yours truly.

Polemics

[Guilty Men: Brexit Edition](#) by 'Cato the Younger' is the most provocative of all the books listed here. It is based on the 1940 classic of the same title that condemned the men guilty of the policy of appeasing Hitler. This Brexit edition is aimed squarely at those in Britain and Europe who Cato argues led Britain into making its biggest mistake since the days of Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. Unapologetic in its tone, the fifteen men and women listed are found guilty of deceit, distortion, personal gain, failures of leadership, and gloating, hubris and frivolity.

Longstanding Eurosceptic Dan Hannan's [What Next: How to get the best from Brexit](#) offers a Leavers analysis of where Britain and UK-EU relations can go next with a focus on the nature of UK democracy.

Christmas stocking fillers

With your productive holiday of Brexit reading behind you, you'll no doubt be keen to keep abreast of the many Brexit books due out later this year. Worry not if you once again find yourself falling behind with reading them. If you're good then maybe on Christmas morning you'll find Santa has stuffed one of the following into your stocking. What better way to spend Boxing Day than reading about Brexit?

The autumn will see the publication of Anand Menon and Geoffrey Evans' [Brexit and British Politics](#). Anand – the Professor of Brexit studies – will be familiar to many as the head of the ESRC's UK in a Changing Europe programme. Their book looks set to explain the outcome of the vote by looking at longer-term trends in British politics.

The autumn will also see [Brexit: What Everyone Needs to Know](#) by David Allen Green. Part of OUP's 'What everyone needs to know' series, what you need to know about Brexit will be set out in the answers to 41 questions.

I'll be adding my own contribution with [Europe's Brexit](#). Thanks to the work of a team of thirty people across Europe, this edited book will look at how the rest of the EU – all twenty seven other member states and the EU's institutions – responded to the UK's renegotiation, referendum campaign, the result of the vote, and reacted up to the triggering of Article 50.

By 2018 we should all have a much better idea of where Brexit is taking us. The year already promises some textbooks to accompany the debate, with a *Handbook of Brexit* planned by Patrick Diamond, Peter Nedergaard and Ben Rosamond. If I spend the summer reading and writing on Brexit then my own [Brexit: A Concise Introduction](#) should also be available thanks to Policy/Bristol University Press. If you can't wait that long then catch the [Brexit: A Crash Course](#) of lectures at NYU on which the book will be based.

This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of LSE Brexit, nor of the London School of Economics.

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